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ABSTRACT

This teaching guide contains two essays about Thomas Jefferson, along with teaching activities, resources and organizations, a chronology, and quotes. The two essays are: (1) "The Architect of Democracy" (Merrill D. Peterson); and (2) "Jefferson's Legacy: Civic Learning in Public Education" (R. Freeman Butts). Teaching activities center around the following topics: (1) "Jefferson, the Architect: Have You Ever Seen Monticello?"; (2) "Jefferson, Student and Politician: Williamsburg and Thomas Jefferson"; (3) "Mapping the World of Thomas Jefferson"; (4) "Jefferson, the Revolutionary: Do You Really Believe in the 'Declaration of Independence'?"; (5) "Jefferson, the Gardener"; (6) "Jefferson, the Author"; (7) "Jefferson, the Bibliophile: What Did Jefferson Read?"; (8) "Jefferson, the President: To Purchase or Not to Purchase Louisiana"; (9) "Expanding Views of the United States and the World"; (10) "Exploration, Expansion, Knowledge"; and (11) "Mapping the United States." (EH)

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THE WORLD OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

THE ARCHITECT OF DEMOCRACY

DR. MERRILL D. PETERSON

Thomas Jefferson was born at Shadwell, in Virginia, on April 13, 1743. His mother, Jane Randolph, was the daughter of a leading family. His father, Peter Jefferson, a self-taught surveyor and mapmaker, had been among the earliest settlers of this wilderness country called Albemarle. He died the first citizen of his county in 1757, leaving to his son a fair estate as well as a zeal for education. According to family tradition, Thomas had read all the books in his father's small library before he was five years of age.

Schools were few and far between in the Virginia of that day. Thomas learned reading, writing, and arithmetic, followed by Greek and Latin, from Anglican parsons who doubled as school teachers. At the age of seventeen, having become a proficient classical scholar, he left the red hills of Albemarle to attend the College of William and Mary in the provincial capital, Williamsburg. Here he came under the influence of Dr. William Small, of Scotland, who introduced him to the new world of scientific inquiry and learning. Nature, he often said, had destined him for the sciences; but no careers opened to science in Virginia, and he took the well-traveled path of the law, where his mentor was the learned George Wythe. The circle of influence was closed by Francis Fauquier, the urbane royal governor, who introduced the youth to the life of cultivated taste and manners. This trio of philosophers -- Small, Wythe, and Fauquier -- formed the best school Jefferson could have had, and some sixty years later he said that their spirited conversation mingled more wit and learning than he had heard in all his life besides.

Jefferson studied law under Wythe's direction for several years after he returned to Albemarle in 1762. Two years

later, when he came of age, he inherited from his father 5,000 acres of land, together with the slaves to work them. He was, of course, a farmer as well as a student. Admitted to the bar in 1767, he entered upon a successful practice. Law led him into politics. In 1769 he succeeded to the seat once held by his father in the House of Burgesses at Williamsburg. He became a leader in the controversy with Great Britain; and in 1774, under the pressure of events leading to the American Revolution, abandoned forever the practice of law.

Two other events during these years were especially significant for Jefferson's life. In 1769, he began to build Monticello, the lovely home perched on a densely wooded summit not far from his birthplace. There were no architects in Virginia, so Jefferson became his own architect; the vision and versatility he showed in this endeavor marked a permanent trait. Learning architecture from books, he discovered his master in the Renaissance Italian Andrea Palladio who had gone to Roman antiquity for his models. Monticello was a modified Palladian villa, and all his later architectural masterpieces -- the Virginia Capitol, the University of Virginia, Poplar Forest -- were in the Palladian manner. Jefferson was a dozen years building Monticello; a decade later he rebuilt it on a larger plan, and the house assumed its ultimate form about the time he left the presidency in 1809. It was a lifelong obsession.

In 1772, Jefferson married Martha Wayles Skelton, an attractive, well-to-do widow from the low country near

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Williamsburg. Their first child was born that year; over the next nine years, five more followed, only two living to maturity. After their last child, Martha died, leaving Jefferson bereft. He never remarried. For the man who prized domestic felicity above every other, he received but a small portion of it. The inheritance from Martha's father in 1774 greatly increased Jefferson's estate. Unfortunately, the property came burdened with debts to English merchants; Jefferson labored all his life to get clear of them without success.

Jefferson rose to fame as "the penman" of the American Revolution. In 1774, in response to *Parliament's Coercive Acts*, he wrote a 6,500 word paper that was published under the title: *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*. Basically a wholesale repudiation of Parliament's authority over the Americans, the pamphlet left allegiance to a common king the only bond with the mother country. The following year Jefferson attended the Continental Congress in Philadelphia as a Virginia delegate. He brought with him, as John Adams said, "a reputation for literature, science, and a happy talent for composition." The latter was promptly employed by Congress in the writing on revolutionary state papers.

On June 11, 1776, the young gentleman of thirty-three who, as an early biographer wrote, "could calculate an eclipse, survey an estate, tie an artery, plan an edifice, try a cause, break a horse, dance the minuet, and play a violin," found himself the head of a five-man committee to prepare the American *Declaration of Independence*. Jefferson's final draft was reported to Congress on July 2. During two and one-half days of debate several changes were made;

most of them were stylistic, some were of substance, for instance, an omission of the author's indictment of George III for imposing the African slave trade on the colonies. As it was passed by Congress on July 4, the *Declaration of Independence* bore the stamp of Jefferson's genius. In the celebrated preamble, he condensed a philosophy of human rights and self-government in words that inspired action and in due time became a national creed. It is Jefferson's greatest legacy to the American people.

Jefferson returned to his native state to revolutionize its government. He worked for more democratic suffrage and representation. He secured the abolition of entail and primogeniture -- vestiges of feudalism -- and worked for wider distribution of landed property. He achieved the disestablishment of the Anglican Church and, after a decade-long campaign, took pride in the passage of his remarkable *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*. This act, in conjunction with the *First Amendment of the United States Constitution*, established the "twin principles" of freedom of religious conscience and separation of church and state in America. Unfortunately, other major reforms of Jefferson's "system," such as gradual emancipation of slaves and a complete plan of public education, met with defeat in Virginia.

In 1779, Jefferson was elected governor of Virginia in succession to Patrick Henry. It was a perilous time. The British Army decided to unravel the rebellion from the south. Virginia became a battleground, as the traitor Benedict Arnold invaded from the sea and Lord Cornwallis stormed into the state from the south. Jefferson acquitted himself well, though he did not escape censure. Exhausted by the

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JEFFERSON'S LEGACY: CIVIC LEARNING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

DR. R. FREEMAN BUTTS

When in the course of current events, it becomes necessary for the American people to reform their education system, these truths are self-evident: that the unalienable purpose of American education is to prepare all youth to become informed and participating citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy; and that to secure the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship, the ideal of universal, free, common schooling has been instituted in all American states.

These truths were set forth by Thomas Jefferson in Virginia in 1779, three years after the *Declaration of Independence*. Two hundred years later, amid a decade of exorbitant rhetoric and political controversy over educational reform, these truths about public education for citizenship have been little noted nor long remembered. They have been overshadowed by laments about the lagging economic competitiveness of our workforce and weakness in basic core subjects in science and math, the superiority of decentralized decision-making and "restructuring of schools" along with greater involvement of parents, and the purported values of parental choice to seek private schooling paid for out of public funds. Efforts for education reform have been further complicated by pervasive fear of violence and crime affecting schools and by a growing alienation of the people toward their government and their political leaders.

No one "quick fix" is the answer to the weakening of the moral and social fabric that threatens to unravel the political culture of the United States. But it might help to remember that even during the trauma of the Revolutionary War, the American states were trying to figure out how to build a viable free and independent political community once they severed their ties with Britain. While the war raged up and down Virginia, Thomas Jefferson was looking ahead, campaigning for public schools and religious

freedom as basic foundations for building a cohesive civic society while honoring the religious and diverse values of pluralist people. The clue is a public system of universal, free, common schooling whose basic purpose is to prepare all citizens for commitment to the democratic values of the public good, freedom, justice, equality, diversity, truth and patriotism.

In 1779, Jefferson introduced into the Virginia House of Burgesses a new code of laws designed to transform his state from a dependent colony into a polity worthy of membership in a free and independent United States. He believed that the most important bills in his code of laws were designed to establish a complete state system of elementary, secondary, and higher education, governed by public officials and supported by tax funds. Only in this way could Virginia overcome the political privileges and economic inequalities inherent in the society of his time. Jefferson said of his bill for *The More General Diffusion of Knowledge*:

"...of all the views of this law none is more important than that of rendering the people safe, as they are the ultimate, guardians of their own liberty....In every government on earth is some trace of human weakness, some germ of corruption and degeneracy, which cunning will discover, and wickedness insensibly open, cultivate and improve. Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves therefore are its only safe depositories....An amendment of our constitution must here come in aid of the public education. The influence over government must be shared among all the people. If every individual which composes their mass participates of the ultimate authority, the government will be safe..."

"IF A NATION EXPECTS TO BE IGNORANT AND FREE, IN A STATE OF CIVILIZATION, IT EXPECTS WHAT NEVER WAS AND NEVER WILL BE."

THOMAS JEFFERSON

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TEACHING ACTIVITIES

I. JEFFERSON, THE ARCHITECT: HAVE YOU EVER SEEN MONTICELLO?

Most students --and indeed most adults-- will answer no to this question, yet most of us are exposed to a likeness of Monticello almost every day of our lives. This likeness appears on the back side of the nickel.

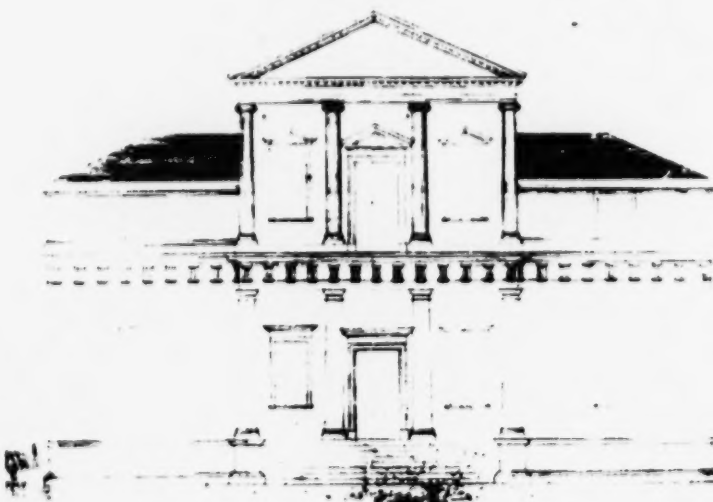
Although Thomas Jefferson originally began construction of Monticello in 1768, he completely redesigned the house after returning from France some years later with new ideas about architecture. The house was built and remodeled over a period of forty years. Monticello was largely furnished with the contents of 86 crates brought back from France. The entrance hall served as an informal museum which he filled with Native American artifacts from Lewis and Clark's expedition. Today, a visit to Monticello is well worth while, but if you can not take your students to the actual site, take them on an imaginary trip. The Monticello Education Department has many resources that will help students visualize Monticello today, as well as when Thomas Jefferson lived there (see resource list for further information).

- Have students compare the image of Monticello on the nickel with the original plan of the first Monticello (on the bottom of this page).
- Have students draw their own likeness of Monticello, or attempt to construct a model of their own.
- How might you have visited Monticello when Thomas Jefferson was alive?
- How would you do it today?

II. JEFFERSON, STUDENT AND POLITICIAN: WILLIAMSBURG AND THOMAS JEFFERSON

During Thomas Jefferson's early life, Williamsburg was the capitol of the Colony of Virginia. In 1780, the capitol of Virginia was moved to Richmond, VA and Williamsburg was all but abandoned. Thomas Jefferson attended the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg and was elected to the House of Burgess in 1769. Today, Williamsburg claims to be the only reconstructed Colonial capitol in America. The programs and activities available at Williamsburg are an excellent way to explore life in

*Last elevation
study by
Jefferson of
the first version
of Monticello*



TEACHING ACTIVITIES

colonial America as well as to understand some of the formative experiences of Thomas Jefferson's life. Colonial Williamsburg will supply you with a free packet of information about visiting the site. Contact them at 1-800-History. These materials can be supplemented with other resources available through the Colonial Williamsburg Interpretive Education Department (see resource list).

III. MAPPING THE WORLD OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

The world Thomas Jefferson was born into and the world in which he died were vastly different places. Jefferson made many major contributions to some of these changes and he himself was influenced by other changes underway in America and the world.

One way to understand these worlds is through maps. Have students compare a map of Virginia at Jefferson's birth and a map of Virginia at his death.

- How did Virginia change during this time, and how might these changes have influenced Jefferson?
- How might Jefferson have contributed to these changes?
- Have students compare a map of the original 13 colonies when Jefferson was born with a map of the United States when Jefferson died. (Some of the changes include the shift of the capitol from Williamsburg to Richmond, the increased settlement of central and western Virginia, the rise of new states west of the Appalachians, the Louisiana Purchase, and information from the Lewis and Clark expedition.)
- Likewise, have students take a map of the world and draw in the nations and empires that existed at the time of Jefferson's birth.
- Compare this with a map of the world at his death. (Some of the major changes include the increase in size and power of the British empire, the liberation of much of Central and South America from Spain, and numerous changes in Europe due to the Napoleonic Wars.)

IV. JEFFERSON, THE REVOLUTIONARY:

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE IN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE?

While many people contributed to the ideas in the *Declaration of Independence*, the major task of writing it fell to Thomas Jefferson. The document was intended to draw the thirteen colonies into rebellion against the largest and most powerful empire in the world. However, the *Declaration of Independence* was more than a political document deriving from the special circumstances of the American Revolution. It was a document that listed the fundamental human rights that are the guiding principles of American democracy. It was also a call to revolution, and it contains many radical ideas and concepts.

Almost every year in early July, someone in the United States removes the title of the document, makes minor revisions in it, and approaches Americans requesting that they sign it. Few people are willing to do so.

- Have students identify what they believe are the enduring ideas and values in the *Declaration of Independence*.
- Why might many Americans be unwilling to agree to the values inherent in the Declaration of Independence?
- How does Jefferson's formulation of "unalienable" rights compare with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights?
- Copies of the many original documents related to Jefferson are available from the National Archives (see resource list).

V. JEFFERSON, THE GARDENER

"No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden. But though an old man, I am but a young gardener." (Jefferson in 1811.)

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Thomas Jefferson was an ardent advocate of agriculture and horticulture and made many contributions in both areas. In fact, he had both ornamental and vegetable gardens, as well as a grove, a vineyard, and two orchards at Monticello. He cultivated over 170 varieties of fruit and experimented with hundreds of types of vegetables and herbs, including almost twenty different kinds of English pea alone! Jefferson kept track of his farming and gardening activities and his books (*Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book*, and *Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book*) on these subjects are currently in print and can be ordered at any bookstore. Jefferson owned many books about agriculture and horticulture, a list of which can be found in *Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book*. You can also visit the exhibits and interpretive gardens at the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants at Monticello.

VI. JEFFERSON, THE AUTHOR

Despite the fact that Jefferson wrote extensively throughout his life, he actually published but one book. This book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, is one of the best descriptions of Virginia in that day. Surprisingly, it was first published in Paris, while Jefferson was U.S. Minister to France, beginning in 1785. This book is easily available in most libraries, and can be ordered through bookstores. It may also be found in *Thomas Jefferson Writings* edited by Merrill D. Peterson.

- Have students read the book.
- Why did Jefferson write the book?
- What does the book say about Virginia? About Jefferson?
- Why didn't Jefferson publish other books?

VII. JEFFERSON, THE BIBLIOPHILE: WHAT DID JEFFERSON READ?

Education during Jefferson's lifetime largely depended upon one's access to books. Unfortunately, there were few public libraries, and Jefferson was an

avid reader. (In fact, he had read all of the books in his father's library by the time he was five and learned to read seven languages during his life.) The result was that Jefferson became a collector of books. After his first collection burned in 1770, he accumulated almost 7,500 volumes. His collection was particularly strong in history, law, and politics. The Catalogue of the library has been edited in five volumes by E. Millicent Sowersby.

- What does this information say about Jefferson's interests?

He sold his great collection to Congress in 1815 and it became a major component of the Library of Congress, which is the largest library in the world today. The Library of Congress is open to researchers (above high school age) and tourists may visit the recently refurbished rotunda across from the Capitol. For information about the Library of Congress contact (202) 707-5000.

VIII. JEFFERSON, THE PRESIDENT: TO PURCHASE OR NOT TO PURCHASE LOUISIANA

Prior to his election as president, Jefferson was considered a "strict constructionist." This meant that he believed that the president and the Federal Government could do only those things explicitly authorized by the Constitution. New Orleans, and the Louisiana territory, had originally been settled by the French. Spain assumed control of the province in 1762. However, Napoleon re-acquired Louisiana in 1800. Due to a variety of reasons, Jefferson wished to obtain the city of New Orleans which controlled the mouth of the Mississippi River. Napoleon made an offer to sell the entire territory of Louisiana. Despite the fact that there was no provision in the Constitution permitting the president to purchase territory, Jefferson agreed to purchase it in 1803. He drafted a constitutional amendment to authorize the acquisition retroactively, but when Congress declined to support it acquiesced in, as he said, making the Constitution by construction.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

IX. EXPANDING VIEWS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD

When Thomas Jefferson became president, the land area of the United States of America extended from the east coast to the Mississippi River. When he died, America extended through most of Montana in the north, the Floridas and half of Texas in the south, and through most of Colorado and Wyoming in the west. For centuries before, explorers from many nations had been searching for a northwest passage across North America. Thomas Jefferson led the vision of expanding the United States with the Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803. The Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806 and the Pike Expedition of 1805-1806 gave America a first glimpse of the new lands.

Jefferson, with his fine library, had read many of the travel books of explorers all over the world. He had endorsed trips to explore the northwest coast of the United States by sea when he was secretary of state. He had supported John Ledyard, a Connecticut Yankee, in the exploration of the west coast across Siberia from Russia. Jefferson learned much from these expeditions; new animals and plants were found and much was learned about the native Americans of the northwest. Jefferson's vision had made this type of exploration and expansion an American policy.

- What other events in American history opened up the eyes of the Americans to the world around them?
- What effect did these events have on American history?
- What did the Lewis and Clark and the Pike expeditions contribute to our scientific and geographic knowledge about the west?
- As America expanded its territory to the Pacific Ocean and beyond, how did Americans view themselves in relation to the rest of the world?
- How have these views been shown on maps of the United States and the world?

X. EXPLORATION, EXPANSION, KNOWLEDGE

Select one of the following events in U.S. history and explain what contribution each of these events made to our knowledge (geographic, scientific, cultural, etc.) or how it affected the expansion of the U.S.

- The Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1806)
- The expedition of Lt. Zebulon Pike (1805-1806)
- Lt. Charles Wilkes' U.S. Exploring Expedition into the Pacific (1838-1842)
- The discovery of gold in California (1848)
- The purchase of Alaska from Russia (1867)

XI. MAPPING THE UNITED STATES

How has America viewed itself on world maps since the beginning of our nation? Look at some atlases and compare world maps done in the United States from the time of Jefferson to the present. Look at at least six maps fifty years apart. Think about the following questions:

- Where is the United States located on the map? In the center? In the eastern hemisphere? Connected to Mexico and South or Central America? Who is in the center of each map?
- Is the United States shown close to or far away from Asia, Europe, and Africa?
- How big is the United States on the map? Make some size comparisons. Remember that the United States can fit in North Africa, and Brazil and the United States are about the same size. Which maps show the United States larger than it is? Do any show the United States smaller?
- Write four general statements about what you have learned after examining these maps. If you looked at the maps of other nations, what do you think you would find out about their size and place in the world? ■

RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS

TEACHER RESOURCE PACKETS

The following teacher resource packets are available from:
The Monticello Education Department, T94, P.O. Box 316
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Finding Isaac Jefferson
(Grades 10-Adult)
Discover how history is researched and interpreted while learning about Thomas Jefferson's slave, Isaac Jefferson. Learn about Isaac Jefferson's work, living conditions, family, and activities through the examination of Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book records and transcribed oral history. In addition to the basic resource packet contents, this unit also includes additional facsimiles and a set of six slides. \$30 (Includes four lessons)

Thomas Jefferson's Family Life
(Grades 3-6)
Discover the personal side of Thomas Jefferson by looking at documents and information about his home and family life. \$25 (Includes five lessons)

Jefferson and Travel
(Grades 4-12)
This unit is designed to acquaint students with the challenges travelling presented to Thomas Jefferson's commitment to serve his country. The lessons give background on travel in Jefferson's day and look at Jefferson's personal accounts and records. \$10 (Includes two lessons)

Discover Jefferson Resource Kit
(Teacher Kit, Grades 4-8)
Created to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth, this kit consists of objects, slides, portraits, documents, a poster, brochures, lessons, and activities to familiarize students with Thomas Jefferson and his times. \$11.95 plus \$3.95 shipping and handling

BOOKS

Notes on the State of Virginia
Jefferson, Thomas (1785)
Norton: NY, NY

In Pursuit of Reason: The Life of Thomas Jefferson
Cunningham, Noble E., Jr. (1987)
Louisiana State University Press: LA

The Presidency of Thomas Jefferson
The Center for Legislative Archives
Washington, DC (1994)

Jefferson the Man in His Own Words
Baron, Robert C. ed. (1993)
Fulcrum/Starwood Publishing
Golden, CO

Jefferson and His Time (vol. 1-6)
Malone, Dumas (1948-81)
Little Brown: Boston, MA

Thomas Jefferson: A Brief Biography
Malone, Dumas (1993)
The American Council
of Learned Societies: NY, NY

Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography
Peterson, Merrill D. (1970)
Oxford University Press: NY, NY

The Democratic Republic 1801-1815
Smelser, Marshall (1968)
Harper & Row: NY, NY

Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson
Koch, Adrienne, and William Peden, eds. (1993)
Random House: NY, NY

The Portable Thomas Jefferson
Peterson, Merrill D., ed. (1975)
Viking Penguin: NY, NY

The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson
Boorstin, Daniel J. (1993)
University of Chicago Press
Chicago, IL

Jefferson's Legacy: A Brief History of the Library of Congress
Cole, John Y. (1993)
Library of Congress
Washington, DC

This Affair of Louisiana
DeConde, Alexander (1976)
Charles Scribner's Sons: NY, NY

Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian
Sheehan, Bernard (1973)
University of NC at Chapel Hill: NC

The Story of the Louisiana Purchase
Phelan, Mary Kay (1979)
Thomas Y. Crowell: NY, NY

After Columbus: The Smithsonian Chronicle of North American Indians
Viola, Herman J. (1990)
Smithsonian Books: Washington, DC

The Political Writings of Thomas Jefferson
Peterson, Merrill D., ed. (1993)
Bobbs-Merrill: Indianapolis, IN

RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book
Betts, Edwin Morris, ann. (1981)
The American Philosophical Society
Philadelphia, PA

Jefferson's English Crisis:
Commerce, Embargo, and the
Republican Revolution
Spivak, Burton (1979)
Books on Demand: Ann Arbor, MI

Wolf by the Ears:
Thomas Jefferson
and Slavery
Miller, John Chester (1991)
University of Virginia: VA

The Papers of Thomas Jefferson
(vol. 1-25)
Boyd, J.P. (1950-1992)
Princeton University Press
Princeton, NJ

Thomas Jefferson:
Statesman of Science
Bedini, Silvio (1990)
MacMillan: NY, NY

The Worlds of Thomas Jefferson
at Monticello
Stein, Susan, ed. (1993)
HN Abrams: NY, NY

The Constitutional Thought
of Thomas Jefferson
Mayer, David N. (1994)
University Press of Virginia:
Charlottesville, VA

Thomas Jefferson
and the Stony Mountains
Jackson, Donald (1981)
University of IL Press at Chicago: IL

Thomas Jefferson: A Reference
Biography (1986)
Peterson, Merrill D. (1986)
Charles Scribner's Sons: NY

The Declaration of Independence
Becker, Carl (1942)
Knopf: NY, NY

ORGANIZATIONS

The Center for
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International Center
for Jeffersonian Studies
Education Department
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Charlottesville, VA 22903
Telephone: (804) 984-9863
Fax: (804) 295-2176 (attn Dr Wilson)

Lewis and Clark Trail Museum
Alexander, ND 58831
Telephone: (701) 828-3595
No fax

Poplar Forest
P.O. Box 419
Forest, VA 24551
Telephone: (804) 525-1806
Fax: (804) 525-7252

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Fax: (202) 357-2116

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Jefferson National Expansion
Memorial
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CHRONOLOGY

IMPORTANT MOMENTS IN THE LIFE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743-1826)

1743

1743 Jefferson born, April 13, at Shadwell, Virginia

1760

1760 Jefferson enters the College of William and Mary

1770

1769 Jefferson elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses; he begins constructing Monticello

1772 Jefferson marries Martha Wayles Skelton

1774 Jefferson writes *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*

1775 Jefferson drafts *Declaration of Independence*; enters Virginia House of Delegates

1779 Jefferson elected governor of Virginia

1780

1782 Jefferson's wife dies

1783 Jefferson elected to the Continental Congress

1784 Jefferson appointed as a commissioner to Europe

1785 Jefferson appointed minister to France; publishes *Notes on the State of Virginia*

1790

1790 Jefferson appointed secretary of state

1793 Jefferson resigns as secretary of state

1796 Jefferson elected vice-president

1800

1800 Jefferson and Aaron Burr tie in the presidential election

1801 Jefferson chosen as president by the House of Representatives

1803 Jefferson completes Louisiana Purchase; Lewis & Clark begin expedition

1804 Jefferson re-elected as president

1807 Jefferson does not run for third term as president

1810

1809 Jefferson retires to Monticello

1819 Jefferson founds the University of Virginia

1826

1826 Jefferson dies, at Monticello, July 4 (50 years after the adoption of the *Declaration of Independence*) at the age of 83

THE QUOTABLE JEFFERSON

- We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.
- Books, really good, acquire just reputation in that time, and so become known to us and communicate to us all their advances in knowledge.
- No man will ever carry out of the presidency the reputation which carried him into it.
- I hold that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical.
- Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.
- I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.
- The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government.

JEFFERSON'S CANONS OF CONDUCT

1. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.
2. Never trouble another with what you can do yourself.
3. Never spend money before you have it.
4. Never buy a thing you do not want, because it is cheap, it will be dear to you.
5. Take care of your cents: dollars will take care of themselves.
6. Pride costs us more than hunger, thirst, and cold.
7. We never repent of having eat too little.
8. Nothing is troublesome that one does willingly.
9. How much pain have cost us the evils which have never happened.
10. Take things always by their smooth handle.
11. Think as you please, and so let others, and you will have no disputes.
12. When annoyed count to 10, before you speak, if very angry, 100.



"Jefferson's objects have not fallen out of date. They are our own objects, if we be faithful to any ideals whatever; and the question we ask ourselves is not, How would Jefferson have pursued them in his day? but How shall we pursue them in ours? It is the spirit, not the tenets of man, by which he rules us from his urn."

Woodrow Wilson, 1906

"As we approach the year 2000, the march of freedom is finally becoming worldwide. The man born at Shadwell, in Virginia, two and one-half centuries ago is still a magnet capable of attracting the hearts and minds of new generations."

Mikhail S. Gorbachev, 1993

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ordeal, he retired from the governorship after two annual terms in June 1781. Personal tragedy struck the following year when his wife died, plunging Jefferson into the deepest gloom of his life. The idyll he had imagined for himself at Monticello was suddenly shattered, but as the gloom lifted, he returned eagerly to public service. Meanwhile Jefferson wrote most of what would become *Notes on the State of Virginia*, his only book. Written in response to inquiries by America's European ally, France, for information on the new nation, Jefferson converted the task into a personal intellectual discovery of his native country, the greater Virginia of that day. A melange of information and opinion on many subjects, from rivers and mountains to laws and aborigines, *Notes on the State of Virginia* is uniquely interesting as a guide to Jefferson's mind,

as well as his native state.

In Congress a brief time in 1783-84, Jefferson laid the foundations of

national policy in two important areas. First, he proposed a uniform decimal system of coins on the dollar unit. This was adopted -- a national mint would follow -- and the system replaced the prevailing chaos in the nation's coinage. Second, his *Ordinance of 1784* established a plan whereby new self-governing states would rise in the national domain west of the Appalachians and each in time would be admitted to the Union on an equality with the original states. The plan evolved into the *Northwest Ordinance of 1787*. Jefferson, a westerner by birth, was deeply interested in the expansion of liberty westward. "An empire of liberty," was his happy phrase. He would live to see the United States flag flying from the tip of Florida to the far reaches of the Missouri River.

In May 1784, Congress appointed Jefferson to a three-man commission to negotiate treaties of commerce with European states. As an agricultural country, the United States needed to dispose of its surpluses abroad and import what it needed in the way of manufactures and other goods. It was also important, in order to secure economic independence from Britain, to open new markets to American ships and productions. The commission met with indifferent success, and soon expired. However, in 1785, Jefferson succeeded Benjamin Franklin as

United States Minister to France, and in that post sought to develop a free commercial system centered upon the new nation's European friend and ally.

The five years Jefferson spent in France were among the happiest of his life. Paris was the acme of enlightenment and felicity. Jefferson haunted the bookstores, frequented the fashionable salons, and indulged his starved appetite for music and theater. He was "violently smitten" by glorious works of architecture, notably the Maison Carree, a Roman ruin, which he saw in the south of France. He used it as the model for a new capitol in Virginia, thereby inaugurating the Roman style in the civic architecture of the republic. As much as he enjoyed the beauties and refinements of France, Jefferson was appalled by the ignorance, poverty, and oppression of the masses of people. Indeed, the more he saw of Europe, the dearer his own country became. The coming of the French Revolution in 1789 opened a new chapter, "the first chapter in the history of European liberty," according to Jefferson. He was a partisan of the revolution from the first, though he always harbored doubts about its course.

When Jefferson returned home in 1789 the new national government under the Constitution was just getting under way, and President Washington prevailed upon him to accept the post of Secretary of State. Absent in France, he had had no part in the framing of the Constitution. Pondering the document in Paris, where tyranny, not anarchy, was the problem, he thought it had been too influenced by fears of democracy. Yet, he approved of most of it. His principal objection was the omission of a *Bill of Rights*; and this was removed in the first Congress where the widespread demand for the addition was met. Jefferson, of course, had impressive qualifications for his new post, which concerned chiefly the nation's foreign affairs. He continued to work for the expansion of American commerce. In addition, he sought to redeem the West from European imperialism, the Spanish on the southern border, the British to the north, both with Indian allies; he sought to exploit any European crisis to the advantage of American independence, wealth, and power. The latter materialized in 1793 when Britain and France went to war and both competed for the favor of America's neutral trade.

By this time, however, the new government was divided by the burgeoning conflict between two political parties, the reigning Federalists and the opposition Republicans, which was personalized in

"WHENEVER PEOPLE ARE WELL-INFORMED THEY CAN BE TRUSTED WITH THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT."

THOMAS JEFFERSON

the cabinet conflict between Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, and Jefferson. Their quarrel originated over Hamilton's measures to finance the huge public debt, establish a national bank, and subsidize manufactures. All these measures tended to benefit privileged monied interests, in Republican opinion, and also break down the restraints of the Constitution. Now this conflict invaded the field of foreign affairs. Jefferson, who had little taste for political combat, had already informed the President of his wish to retire, and he did so in 1793.

"My farm, my family and my books call me to them irresistibly," Jefferson wrote; nor did he expect to be called from them again. As the party conflict deepened, however, and Jay's Treaty seemed to throw the United States back into British arms, the Republicans made him their candidate against John Adams, the vice president, in the presidential election of 1796. The New Englander prevailed in a close contest. Drawn into the swirling currents of the European war, his administration blew up a crisis over sedition and loyalty at home in order to cripple the Republicans and to remain in power. *The Alien and Sedition Laws*, which sought the deportation of dangerous aliens and punished allegedly false, malicious, and scandalous writings against the government, were the main vehicles of this strategy. Jefferson, the vice president, led the opposition against the laws. In 1798 he secretly drafted the *Kentucky resolutions* (his friend James Madison drafted similar resolutions in Virginia) which invoked the rights of the states to declare these oppressive laws unconstitutional.

The conflict came to a head and found its resolution in the election of 1800. It was bitterly fought. In the end, Jefferson had to prevail not only over Adams but also over his Republican running mate, Aaron Burr. In his Inaugural Address -- a political touchstone for generations to come -- he appealed for the restoration of harmony and affections. "We have called by different names brethren of the same principle," he intoned. "We are all republicans, we are all federalists." Conciliation did not exclude reform, however. Jefferson's administration was marked by the abolition of excise taxes, by reduced federal expenditures, by planned retirement of the debt over a period of fifteen years, and by reform of the federal judiciary.

The President's greatest triumph, and his greatest defeat, came in foreign affairs. The Louisiana

Purchase in 1803 not only ended the danger of the French empire on the continent but added some 820,000 square miles to the Union, virtually doubling its size, undergirding Jefferson's conception of a "chosen country" of free and independent farmers. The Lewis and Clark Expedition was an astonishing reconnaissance of the vast domain, one that envisioned American expansion to the Pacific.

Jefferson was easily reelected in 1804, but his second term was less a triumph than an ordeal. His once successful method of working with Congress broke down; he was bedeviled by the Burr Conspiracy in the southwest; worst of all, his efforts to keep the United States neutral and at peace in an Atlantic world devastated by war finally led him to embargo American ships, seamen, and goods from the oceans. The Embargo Act of 1807-09 was an experiment to test the effectiveness of Jefferson's idea of "peaceable coercion." It called for American sacrifice in order to secure justice from Britain and France. However noble the experiment, it failed, and the upshot was the Second War with Great Britain in the administration of his successor, James Madison.

Upon his retirement, Jefferson said he felt like "a prisoner released from his chains." He returned to Monticello. There his life was full, not only with family and farms, but with streams of visitors and extensive correspondence, with much reading and reflection, and above all, with renewed pursuit of the old goal of a system of public education for Virginia. Once again, the general plan was rejected. However, the legislature approved one part of it, the state university. To raise the apex of the pyramid without the foundation in the schools struck Jefferson as an act of folly. Nevertheless, he rejoiced in the University of Virginia, chartered in 1819, and was its master builder in every part. It finally opened its doors to students sixteen months before his death.

Jefferson died at Monticello on the 50th anniversary of American independence, July 4, 1826. A meticulous man to the end, he designed his own tombstone and wrote his own epitaph as well. He wished to be remembered by but three "testimonials" of his life:

*Author of the Declaration of Independence
Of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom
And Father of the University of Virginia.*

Americans need not wonder, why, from all his achievements, he selected but these three, for they best embodied his highest values. ■

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To achieve these civic goals in common schools, he argued that instead of "putting the Bible and Testament into the hands of children at an age when their judgments are not sufficiently matured for religious inquiries," they should study history:

"History, by apprising them of the past, will enable them to judge the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men; it will enable them to know ambition under every guise it may assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views."

"IT IS A SINGULAR ANXIETY WHICH SOME PEOPLE HAVE THAT WE SHOULD ALL THINK ALIKE. WOULD THE WORLD BE MORE BEAUTIFUL WERE ALL OUR FACES ALIKE?"

THOMAS JEFFERSON

Jefferson also proposed that his plan for a state system of primary and secondary schools should be capped by transform-

ing the College of William and Mary into a state university. These bills were not adopted in 1779. But Jefferson was not dissuaded. As noted by Professor Merrill Peterson, Jefferson spent much of his retirement years at Monticello returning to his campaigns for a state system to exercise wisely and virtuously their rights and responsibilities as citizens and as public servants in a democracy.

Note especially that in his plans for the state University of Virginia his goals for "the higher branches of education" were heavily weighted on the side of what he or other Founders called civic virtue. The goals were clearly designed to promote the public good as the culmination of a state system of public education:

"To form the statesmen, legislators, and judges on whom public prosperity and individual happiness are so much to depend;

"To expound the principles of structure of government, the laws which regulate the intercourse of nations, those formed municipally for our own government, and a sound spirit of legislation, which, banishing all arbitrary and unnecessary restraint on individual action shall leave us free to do whatever does not violate the equal rights of another....

"To develop the reasoning faculties of our youth, enlarge their minds, cultivate their morals, and instill into them the precepts of virtue and order....

"And, generally to form them to habits of reflection and correct action, rendering them examples of virtue to others, and of happiness within themselves."

Although Jefferson's specific prescriptions of the knowledge required for informed citizenship in his day cannot be a detailed curriculum guide for us after two centuries of rapid scientific, economic, and political change, the essence of his *goals* for civic learning are now included in the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* passed by Congress and signed into law in May 1994, much of which in turn is embodied in the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965. These federal actions will undoubtedly affect teachers, curriculum makers, textbook writers, and these developers as they seek to translate the new voluntary national standards of education for core studies into specific knowledge and learning.

Dumas Malone, noted historian, said this about Jefferson's views of popular education in relation to democratic republican government: "In the light of history, nothing else that he did or proposed during his entire career showed him more clearly to be a major American prophet." True; but today, to paraphrase Matthew (13:57) and Kipling, Jefferson is in danger of becoming a prophet "honored all over the earth except in his own country, and in his own house [state of Virginia]." The crescendo of attacks upon public education, the efforts to censor curriculum, tests, and texts, and the campaigns to inject religion into public schools and promote private education with public funds threaten to undermine the Jeffersonian ideal in many states of the Union.

It therefore behooves all those intent upon educational reform to look closely again at the ideas and ideals of Jefferson's views of civic learning, especially standards for the study of history, civics and government, economics, and social studies. Many of the most highly publicized and well financed private projects of the early 1990s have paid little attention to civic education. On the other hand, several major academic and professional groups have been working on projects that intrinsically touch upon civic learning as they develop new programs in history, social studies, law-related education, geography, and economics.

But the centerpiece studies focusing primarily on civic competence and responsibility have been the materials on civics and government produced by the Center for Civic Education, especially those issued since the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution in 1987: the national program now called *WE THE PEOPLE... THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION*, the

framework for civic education called *CIVITAS* (1991), and the *National Standards for Civics and Government* (1994). To borrow Jefferson's words when he described his own common school bill, the material in these volumes "is not all that is necessary, though it be essentially necessary."

In the development of *We the People*, *CIVITAS*, and the *National Standards* a wide consensus arose concerning the core of knowledge that defines the fundamental values and principles underlying the American constitutional order as well as the behavior of civility and commitments desirable for a citizen's participation in a democratic society.

CIVITAS deals with three major topics: Civic Virtue, Civic Participation, and Civic Knowledge. Each topic is treated from three perspectives: conceptual, historical, and contemporary. They strike a balance between the civic values comprising the common and cohesive core of democratic constitutional government and the civic values of cultural, religious, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. They do not shrink from discussing the ideas and values of "civic virtue," so often at the heart of Jefferson's proposals: the concepts of the public good, freedom and individual rights, justice, equality, diversity, truth, and patriotism.

There was a time, not so long ago, when the phrase "civic virtue" would have been laughed out of the classroom or off the campus. But times have changed. Now, when many citizens are obviously frustrated, alienated, and angry over perceived corruption and scandal in both the public and private sectors of the nation, who can say that closer adherence to civic virtues is not imperative for elected or appointed officials - or for the citizens who put them into positions of public office? Re-energizing a sense of "civic virtue" and of obligation for the public good among the youth of the land may be the single most important item on the agenda of American education.

The new National Education Goals Panel and the National Education Standards and Improvement Council can now make it clear and explicit that responsible citizenship is a core requirement of the national content and performance standards of achievement expected of all American youth. To this end, the civic foundations of education should become a core requirement in the preservice and inservice education of all teachers of civics, government, history, economics, and social studies.

Jefferson's legacy will continue -- if, as Benjamin Franklin declared of the Constitution establishing the Republic, we can keep it and -- if we apply to modern American education the spirit of Jefferson's vision of civic learning as a regular, recognizable, and prominent part of the curriculum, the life, and the culture of all educational institutions from elementary to graduate school.

Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence* called for equality in achieving the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This means that public education in common schools should be maintained and strengthened in access, curriculum, and quality as fundamental means to achieving equality of opportunity for all Americans.

Jefferson's *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom* declared:

"...no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civic capacities."

This means that public schools shall not promote religious beliefs nor shall public funds be used to support religious teachings, religious teachers, or religious schools.

Jefferson's University of Virginia spelled out civic aims as the core of its overarching goals (as noted earlier.) In this vein, the *National Standards for Civics and Government* spell out the knowledge and values necessary for achieving those ends:

- What is government and what should it do?
- What are the foundations of the American political system?
- How does the government established by the Constitution embody the principals and purposes of American democracy?
- What is the relationship of American politics and government world affairs?
- What are the roles of the citizen in the American political system?

"PEACE, COMMERCE AND HONEST FRIENDSHIP
WITH ALL NATIONS -- ENTANGLING ALLIANCES
WITH NONE."

THOMAS JEFFERSON

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I think Jefferson would approve of those questions and would relish knowing how much our contemporary answers embody the values and principles of the government he did so much to establish and which he served so well. Those who are setting out to design "a new generation of American schools," whether public or private, should be learning again from Jefferson to prepare all students for a lifetime of committed

citizenship as well as how to engage many more youth in commitment to a career of public service. To these ends, we need not only a good public education, we need an education devoted to the public good, what Thomas Jefferson called the "civic virtue" required of citizens in a democratic republic. ■

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In Congress, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do.—And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.